



## MOTHERS NOTEBOOK

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provider and employer**

## Four Month Edition

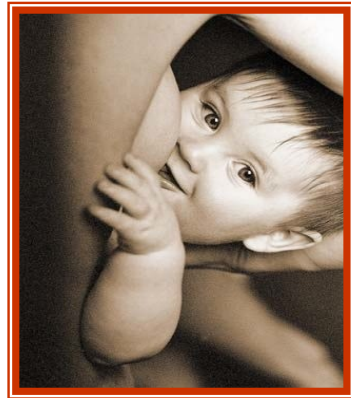
Your baby will continue to grow well on breast milk for the few months. Although you may be tempted to try giving your baby solids food early, there are a number of reasons to wait till six months.

- Babies' intestinal tracts are immature. It is easier for them to develop allergies if you feed them solid foods too early.
- Babies' muscles are not able to coordinate sucking and swallowing solid foods yet. When a baby can sit and reach out for objects, he or she will probably be able to use the mouth muscles to swallow solids as well.
- When babies are given solid foods too early, they may fail to get all the nutrition they need from breast milk.

### Breastfeeding when your baby wants to “multi task”

By four months babies are pretty good at breastfeeding and decides he doesn't need to concentrate so hard. Now he wants to “multi-task”. He catches sight of something out of the corner of his eye and turns his head to see it, often taking the nipple with him!

Almost anything can be a distraction: the TV, ceiling fan, dog or an someone walking past. It is often worse when mother and baby are out in new surroundings; the baby is hungry, but just keeps wanting to look around and check everything out. Many mothers worry this behavior means that the baby is losing interest in nursing or that their milk supply is declining.



This is just a change in the baby's development and not a signal he is ready to wean. Baby's initial pulling off is probably not an indication that he is finished - just an indication that he saw or heard something interesting across the room. Until this stage has passed, baby may need a quiet place to nurse until he's figured out how to deal with distraction. Tricks to try:

- **Try to catch your baby** when he's more willing, such as when he's just waking up, already a little sleepy, or actually asleep. When he pulls off, try to coax him back to the breast a few more times before giving up.
- **Add movement.** Walking or rocking while breastfeeding can help. The motion lulls the baby and reduces his need to look around.
- **Nurse in a sling.** Adjust your sling to a nursing position and pull up the fabric behind baby's head to shield her from any nearby activity. You can also walk around more easily with baby in a sling. Don't have one? Try draping a blanket to shut out the visual distractions.
- **Get baby's attention.** If you can get your baby to focus on you, she'll feed better. Try singing or telling a story while looking at your baby's face. Chances are she'll keep her eyes glued to your face as well and keep on nursing.
- **Keep feeding.** This is *not* the time to cut back on night feedings, as the multi tasking baby often makes up the calories during those quiet moments. You can be more relaxed about your baby's on-again, off-again feeding style during the day if you know she's settling in for some better feedings at night. One study showed that older babies can consume as much as 25% of their total daily intake of breastmilk during the night, probably partly because of daytime distractibility.

Like all things, this will change over time. Usually you will see a big improvement when the baby becomes more mobile — when she can roll or scoot to see something she's interested in. Then the baby starts to do exploring in between feeding times and are ready to focus on breastfeeding when they are hungry. If you are you worried that these frequently interrupted feedings mean your baby isn't getting enough milk; remember that older babies are usually more efficient at breastfeeding. So even if he's spending less time at the breast, he may be getting plenty.

**At your next WIC appointment, don't forget to have a picture of you and your baby taken for the 6 month Breastfeeding Board**